

WE CLAIM:

1. A semi-solid composition suitable for use in personal oral, dental, or skin care, *characterised in that* the composition comprises a semi-solid gel; the gel comprising at least one pharmaceutically acceptable active ingredient intimately mixed with at least one gelling agent; the at least one gelling agent providing, upon solidification, a semi-solid gel having a gel framework comprising sufficient containment means for the at least one active ingredient during storage; the gel framework being capable of breaking apart when the composition is forcibly disrupted by a person and making the at least one active ingredient available for use in a personal oral, dental, or skin care procedure.
2. A semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 1, *characterised in that* the at least one gelling agent is present in a proportion within a range at least sufficiently high to cause the composition after solidification to remain in the semi-solid state when held at or below a storage temperature; yet not so high that the semi-solid composition is unable to be broken apart in order to make the at least one active ingredient available when the composition is forcibly disrupted by a person.
3. A semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 2, *characterised in that* the gelling agent includes agar at a concentration in a range of from about 0.1 to about 2 per cent by weight.
4. A semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 2, *characterised in that* the gelling agent comprises agar at a concentration in a range of from about 0.3 to about 0.95 per cent by weight.
5. A semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 2, *characterised in that* the gelling agent comprises gelatin at a concentration in a range of from about 1 to about 4 per cent by weight.
6. A semi-solid dental care composition as claimed in claim 2 including active ingredients characteristic of a dentifrice, such as a surface-active agent, a foam stabiliser, a dentally acceptable abrasive; a flavouring agent, a colouring agent, and a humectant, *characterised in that* the composition includes one or more gelling agents in an amount sufficient to maintain structural integrity at a

temperature up to about 40 degrees Celsius yet permitting the structure to break apart when forcibly disrupted by a person.

- 7.A bead comprised of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 6, characterised in that each bead is homogenous and non-encapsulated and includes sufficient active ingredients for a single procedure.
- 8.A bead comprised of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 7, characterised in that the bead has a mass in the range of from about 0.4 gram to about 1 gram.
9. A bead comprised of a semi-solid composition according to claim 7, characterised in that at least one characteristic of the bead selected from the range of: shape, colour, and flavour is selected in order to appeal in particular to a child, so that the child is more likely to make use of the bead for dental hygiene.
10. A kit or pack for use in dental care, including at least one bead of a semi-solid gel as claimed in claim 7; characterised in that the at least one bead is stored within a compartment within the pack.
11. A kit or pack for use in dental care as claimed in claim 10, characterised in that the pack further provides an application tool including means for contacting a plurality of surfaces of the person's teeth, so that after disruption of a bead and release of the at least one active ingredient adjacent to the teeth, use of the tool promotes cleansing of the teeth.
12. A kit or pack as claimed in claim 10, *characterised in that* each compartment comprises a depression formed in a deformable sheet and covering means for covering the depression.
13. A semi-solid oral care composition as claimed in claim 2 including active ingredients characteristic of a mouth freshener / oral disinfectant typically including a surface-active agent, a foam stabiliser, a disinfectant, and a flavouring agent, *characterised in that* the composition includes one or more gelling agents in an amount sufficient to maintain structural integrity of a gel framework during storage yet permitting the structure to break apart when forcibly disrupted by a person.

14. A kit or pack for use in oral care, including at least one bead of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 13; characterised in that the pack includes at least one bead provided within a compartment and wherein the at least one active ingredients of the semi-solid composition include a disinfectant material, so that after ingestion and disruption within the mouth, odour from the person's mouth or pharynx is reduced.
15. A semi-solid skin care composition as claimed in claim 2 including at least one active ingredient characteristic of a personal skin care composition, such as a surface-active agent or soap, a foam stabiliser, a moisturiser; a skin conditioner, a flavouring agent, a compound capable of absorbing ultra-violet light, *characterised in that* the composition includes one or more gelling agents in an amount sufficient to maintain structural integrity during storage yet permitting the structure to break apart and release the at least one active ingredient when forcibly disrupted by a person.
16. A kit or pack for use in skin care, including at least one bead comprised of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 15; characterised in that the at least one bead is provided within a compartment.
17. A kit or pack for use in skin care as claimed in claim 16; characterised in that the pack further includes shaving means including at least one item selected from: a brush, a disposable razor, and one or more beads comprised of toiletry materials selected from the range of pre-shave conditioners, after-shave conditioners, and moisturisers.
18. A kit or pack for use in skin care as claimed in claim 16 or in claim 17; characterised in that the pack includes at least one tool, and at least one bead of a semi-solid composition held within corresponding cavities within a blister pack.
19. A method for manufacture of beads of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 1, characterised in that the method includes the steps of mixing water with at least one of the pharmaceutically acceptable active ingredients together with the at least one gelling agent at a temperature sufficient to melt the gelling agent, then cooling the mixture to a lower temperature at which the composition is still melted, then optionally of adding and mixing at least one further active

ingredient, then of expelling the mixture from an orifice.

20. A method for manufacture of beads of a semi-solid composition as claimed in claim 19, characterised in that after expulsion from the orifice the mixture is cooled so as to cause solidification, then the solidified mixture is separated into one or more homogenous beads each having a desired mass.
21. Apparatus for the manufacture of packs or kits including active ingredients according to the method claimed in claim 19, characterised in that the apparatus includes means for deposition of a controlled amount of the melted composition from the orifice into at least one of a plurality of depressions formed in a deformable sheet, means to allow the molten composition to solidify, thereby forming at least one cast-in-place bead, and means to enclose the at least one bead by placement of a covering sheet over the depression, so that a pack holding at least one cast-in-place bead is thereby manufactured.
22. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19, characterised in that the apparatus includes means for inclusion in the pack or kit of at least one tool selected from the range of toothbrushes, brushes, and razors.